

# The journey that made space history

On April 12, 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space, completing a single orbit of Earth in 108 minutes. The feat – which made Gagarin a national hero – was used by the Soviet Union as a major Cold War propaganda coup

**Launch:** 06:07GMT.  
Tyuratam Missile Range (Baikonur Cosmodrome), Kazakhstan

**2**

Final stage shut down – Vostok reaches orbit

06:37GMT: Enter eclipse

07:00GMT: News of mission broadcast on Radio Moscow

07:10GMT: Exit eclipse

**Landing:** 08:05GMT near Engels, Saratov region

**3 Re-entry:** Mission comes close to disaster as securing band fails to detach – capsule begins to tumble

**4**

Gagarin ejects at 7,000m – first parachute deployed

**5**

Gagarin separates from seat at 4,000m, landing with own parachute. Descent module lands nearby

**VOSTOK-1 DESCENT MODULE**  
Covered with protective heat shield

**SERVICE MODULE:**  
Jettisoned before re-entry

**FINAL STAGE OF LAUNCH VEHICLE**

Vostok launches. Gagarin shouts "Poyekhali!" ("Let's go!")

Vostok-K rocket

Communications antenna

Radio command link antenna

Control panel  
Indicates cabin pressure and orbital position

TV camera  
Vzor Optical alignment device

Ejector seat  
Securing bands

Oxygen / nitrogen for life support

Antennas

**VOSTOK-1**

Weight: 4.7 tonnes

Length: 4.4m

**FLIGHT FACTS**

Duration 108 minutes

Space time 89 minutes

Speed 27,400km/hour

Max. altitude 327km

TDU-1 retro rocket

Entry/exit hatch  
Blown off when ejector seat fired



Gagarin is welcomed as the paragon of "New Soviet Man". The eight-year U.S./Soviet Space Race to put a man on the Moon begins